

1 [0061]

CLAIMS

We claim:

1 1. A method of forming a silicon oxide layer having a thickness ranging from about
2 3 μm to about 200 μm in a silicon containing structure, said method comprising:

3 a) etching a plurality of trenches having a nominal trench opening width, a nominal
4 trench opening height and separated by trench walls of nominal wall thickness within
5 said silicon structure; and

6 b) thermally oxidizing said silicon structure.

1 2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said nominal thickness of said trench
2 wall is consumed during said thermal oxidation to provide silicon oxide.

1 3. The method according to Claim 2, wherein said nominal trench opening width is
2 about 2 times said nominal wall thickness.

1 4. The method according to Claim 2, wherein said nominal wall thickness is less
2 than 4 μm .

1 5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said trench openings are formed by
2 plasma etching.

3 6. The method according to Claim 5, wherein said plasma etching is reactive ion
4 etching.

8. The method according to Claim 6, wherein an aspect ratio of said nominal trench
9 opening height to said trench opening width ranges from about 1 to about 50.

10 9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein said aspect ratio is less than about 50 :
11 1.

12 10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said method includes an additional
13 step:
14 c) selectively removing silicon oxide from at least one exterior surface of said
15 silicon containing structure.

16 11. The method according to Claim 7, wherein said etching produces a trench having
17 essentially vertical sidewalls.

18 12. A method of forming an electrically isolating region in a silicon containing
19 structure comprising:
20 etching a plurality of openings, each opening separated by a nominal distance in
21 said silicon-containing structure; and
22 oxidizing said silicon structure.

23 13. The method according to Claim 12, wherein said opening extends only partly
24 through a silicon-containing layer in said silicon-containing structure or extends
25 only partly though said silicon-containing structure.

26 14. The method according to Claim 12, wherein said opening extends completely
27 though a silicon-containing layer in said silicon-containing structure or extends
28 completely through said silicon-containing structure.

29 15. The method according to Claim 14, wherein a portion of said silicon-containing
30 layer or said silicon-containing structure is connected to another portion of said silicon-
31 containing layer or silicon containing structure respectively, by at least one silicon
32 bridge.

33 16. A method of forming a shaped electrically isolated region in a silicon structure
34 comprising:

35 etching at least one first opening a nominal distance into a first side of said
36 silicon structure;

37 etching at least one second opening a nominal distance into a second side of said
38 silicon structure; and

39 oxidizing said silicon structure.

40

41 17. The method according to Claim 16, wherein said first side of said silicon
42 structure is directly opposite to said second side of said silicon structure, and wherein
43 unetched silicon forms a silicon bridge between said first opening and said second

44 opening.

45 18. The method according to Claim 17, whercin said silicon bridge between said first
46 opening and said second opening is about 4 μ m or less in thickness.

47 19. The method according to Claim 16, wherein silicon oxide formed on at least one
48 exterior surface is selectively removed by plasma etching.

49 20. The method according to Claim 16, wherein silicon oxide formed on at least one
50 exterior surface is selectively removed by lapping or polishing.

51 21. A method of forming an isolating interconnect through-opening within a multi-
52 layered silicon structure comprising:

53 a) etching at least one through-opening through a plurality of individual silicon
54 structure layers at a particular location on each silicon structure layer;
55 b) oxidizing said silicon structure, creating at least one oxidized region at each
56 through-opening;

57 c) selectively removing silicon oxide from an exterior surface of each silicon
58 structure layer which is to be bonded to another silicon structure or silicon structure
59 layer; and

60 d) bonding a plurality of silicon structures to provide at least one continuous
61 oxidized region through said bonded silicon structure.

62 22. The method according to Claim 21, wherein said bonding is fusion bonding.

63 23. The method according to Claim 21, wherein said bonding is via eutectic
64 processing.

65 24. The method according to Claims 21, wherein said multi-layered silicon structure
66 includes stress release elements.

67 25. The method according to Claim 21, including an additional step e) in which
68 oxidized silicon is removed from exterior surfaces of said multi-layered silicon structure
69 subsequent to said bonding.

70 26. The method according to Claim 21, wherein subsequent to said bonding, an
71 additional step f) is carried out in which a through-opening is created through at least one
72 continuous oxidized region which extends through said multilayered silicon structure.

73 27. The method according to Claim 26, wherein a conductive material is applied over
74 or passed through said through-opening.

75 28. The method according to Claim 27, wherein said through-opening is coated with
76 a conductor.

77 29. A method of creating isolation regions in a silicon structure comprising:
78 etching a plurality of openings through said silicon structure, creating a shaped
79 portion separated by spokes between said plurality of openings; and
80 oxidizing said silicon structure, wherein said spokes are converted to silicon

81 oxide which at least partially fills said etched openings.

82 30. The method according to Claim 29, wherein said openings are completely filled
83 with silicon oxide.

84 31. The method according to Claim 30, wherein said spokes exhibit a thickness of
85 about 4 μm or less.

86 32. The method according to Claim 29, wherein silicon oxide is removed from at
87 least one exterior surface of said silicon structure.

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